

College Access Initiative

What is the College Access Initiative Program and why is it needed?

The College Access Initiative Program is an outreach effort designed to motivate Kentuckians to enroll and succeed in college. Kentucky needs to double the number of baccalaureate degree holders to reach the national average of educational attainment by the year 2020. This program will provide college-going information to prospective students, including traditional and adult students, transfer students, and GED completers. Additionally, the program will target middle school and high school students enrolled at low-income GEAR UP schools. Recent research shows that many Kentuckians still do not see the value of postsecondary education. In addition, they have greatly exaggerated perceptions of college costs and limited knowledge of opportunities for financial aid that also discourage college attendance. Unless we make the case for college with those Kentuckians and provide accurate information that increases their postsecondary aspirations, Kentucky will never reach its 2020 goals.

How does the program work?

This outreach program will be a coordinated effort with the Southern Governors' Association, the Southern Regional Education Board, colleges and universities, Kentucky Adult Education, GEAR UP Kentucky, Kentucky's local P-16 council network, and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority to use media and grassroots programs in communities across the state to help more Kentuckians plan for, pay for, apply to, and succeed in postsecondary education. It will build on the nationally recognized success of the 2000-03 "Go Higher Kentucky" outreach program.

What is the Council's request?

The Council seeks \$1 million of recurring funds in 2006-07 to cover program costs.

Why is the funding needed?

The 2000-03 college access program helped Kentucky reach milestones in educational attainment. Record high enrollments were achieved across all levels – adult education, workplace education, and college. During the campaign Kentucky ranked sixth in the nation in percentage increase in GED completers, and the percentage of completers going on to college almost doubled. The access program continues to be recognized nationally for its success. Core state funding was lost during the economic downturn. With core funding restored, the program can build on new infrastructure and partnership support generated by the initial success of the program to leverage greater impact for state funds, including:

- A grant awarded in December 2005 from the Southern Governors' Association, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to provide technical support for this college access initiative.
- The Go Higher Kentucky Web site developed by KHEAA (a \$1 million investment).
- A call center linked to a statewide postsecondary advising network to provide a "high-tech/high-touch" one-stop shop resource with all the information needed to plan, prepare, and apply to college.
- The SREB regional Go Alliance that provides campaign resources, including media materials generated across the 16 SREB states that form the Alliance.
- The CPE's new \$42 million (over six years) federal GEAR UP award. Every campaign dollar spent in support of GEAR UP will bring a dollar of federal money into the state in this matching grant. GEAR UP Kentucky promotes college preparation and attendance of low-income middle and high school students.



Photo source: Go Higher Kentucky Communications Campaign

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